

U. S. Denies Part in Plot Against Diem

By Neil Sheehan

SAIGON, South Viet-Nam,

July 6 (UPI) — The United States Embassy today denied a Vietnamese government prosecutor's charge that the United States was involved in the abortive 1960 coup d'etat against President Ngo Dinh Diem.

The prosecutor made the charge yesterday at a special session of a military tribunal trying Vietnamese army officers and men as plotters in the coup attempt.

The U. S. Embassy declined to go beyond a simple verbal denial of the charge. It gave no indication that a formal protest would be made. The American disappointed community in Saigon had expected the United States to make a vigorous protest.

Many American officials consider the accusation a deliberate attempt to discredit the United States.

They were angered when Diem's brother and political adviser, Ngo Dinh Nhu, accused the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency of involvement in the unsuccessful coup during an interview with Washington Post correspondent Warren Unna in April.

"The Vietnamese government knows damn well we had nothing to do with the coup," one American said.

Col. Nguyen Chanh Thi, commander of the 1960 rebels now in refuge in Cambodia, told an Associated Press correspondent several months ago that United States officials actually tried to discourage the coup. American agents persuaded the rebel units not to kill Diem and to try to

work with the Diem government.]

U. S. Embassy Charge A U. S. Embassy charge that American newsmen "flatly, unequivocally and officially, the United States was not assisting, aiding or abetting those people who were trying to overthrow the government of Viet-Nam in 1960." Truehart would not make further comment. He is now the senior U. S. diplomat in Saigon.

The accused plotters, 19 officers and men, all paratroopers who went on trial Friday. They pleaded during a lengthy public trial session today that they were forced or tricked into taking part by the seven paratroop officers who fled to Cambodia when the coup failed.

The prosecutor had indicated that light sentences would be imposed if the accused had actually been tricked or forced into participation. The seven leaders, being tried in absentia, are expected to get the death sentence.

A number of civilians will also be tried after the tribunal is finished with the soldiers. Some civilians will be tried in absentia.

Two United States officials, who have since left Viet-Nam, were accused of helping in the plot.

George Carver, 28, a U. S. civilian employe of the military, and Howard Elting, deputy chief of the United States mission in Saigon at the time of the coup, were identified by a Vietnamese source as the men named in the government prosecutor's accusation.

Sources close to the U. S. Embassy said the Embassy is

taking the line that since the charges were not made in public it would consider them as "rumors" and so it would not have to protest to the Vietnamese government.

Many of the American officials who reacted strongly to

the accusation in private conversation hold top posts in the U. S. intelligence network in Saigon.

Some here believe that by accusing the United States of helping in the 1960 plot, Diem's government aims to warn the U. S. against becoming involved in other coups; and by saying the U. S. promised to help the plotters and then deserted them, the government hopes to discredit the U. S. in the eyes of young, discontented army officers.

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